

## CLAIMS

We claim:

1. An apparatus for processing lawn and garden organic debris comprising:  
a fan housing having a wall with an opening for allowing air to pass  
5 therethrough;  
a retainer plate surrounding a portion of the opening and coupled to the wall, the  
retainer plate being spaced from the wall to define a slot between the wall and the retainer plate;  
and  
a hose having a nozzle at a first end and a flange at a second end, the flange  
10 being releasably positionable in the slot such that the opening and hose are in fluid  
communication.
2. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising at least first and second connectors and at  
least one protrusion extending outwardly from the wall, the connectors and at least one  
protrusion circumscribing a perimeter, wherein the retainer plate is coupled to the wall by the at  
15 least first and second connectors.
3. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the flange is rotatable with respect to the fan housing  
while coupled to the wall by the at least first and second connectors.
4. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the retainer plate has a semi-circular shape.
5. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the flange has a circular shape.
- 20 6. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the connectors are a combination of threaded studs  
and threaded retainers.
7. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the threaded retainers are wing nuts.
8. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the threaded retainers are threaded hand knobs.
9. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the protrusion is a pin.
- 25 10. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a third connector disposed along the  
perimeter, intermediate the first and second connectors and positioned generally opposite the at  
least one protrusion.
11. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a safety interlock switch disposed on the  
fan housing wall, the safety switch being actuated when the flange is in the slot to allow the  
30 apparatus to be operational.
12. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:

a fan assembly mounted for rotation within the fan housing, including a fan impeller having a plurality of fan blades;

each of the plurality of fan blades having a base portion and a tip portion;

the base portions extending generally radially from an axis of rotation of the fan

5 impeller; and

the tip portions being inclined relative to the base portions in a direction opposite a direction of rotation of the fan impeller.

13. The apparatus of claim 12 wherein the tip portion is inclined relative to the base portion at an angle between 50 and 80 degrees.

10 14. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:

a fan assembly mounted for rotation within the fan housing, including a fan impeller having a plurality of fan blades, and

a plurality of shredding blades connected to and projecting forwardly from the fan impeller toward the inlet.

15 15. The apparatus of claim 14 wherein each of the plurality of shredding blades includes a tip portion having two intersecting angled edges.